

HOUSE BILL 98

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HB 439/02 - CGM

2003 Regular Session
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By: **Delegates Bronrott, Franchot, Hixson, Murray, Aumann, Barkley, Bromwell, G. Clagett, V. Clagett, Cryor, DeBoy, Dumais, Feldman, Frush, Goldwater, Gutierrez, Hubbard, Kaiser, Kelley, King, Lee, Madaleno, Mandel, Menes, Moe, Montgomery, Nathan-Pulliam, Paige, Rudolph, Simmons, Sophocleus, Taylor, and ~~Vaughn~~ Vaughn, Benson, Haynes, Morhaim, V. Turner, and Oaks**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2003
Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
House action: Adopted
Read second time: March 18, 2003

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Designations - Walking as the State Exercise**

3 FOR the purpose of designating walking as the State exercise.

4 BY adding to

5 Article - State Government

6 Section 13-318

7 Annotated Code of Maryland

8 (1999 Replacement Volume and 2002 Supplement)

9 Preamble

10 WHEREAS, Heart disease is the number one cause of death each year in
11 Maryland, and thousands of Maryland citizens suffer from disease and other health
12 problems as a result of a lack of physical activity; and

13 WHEREAS, Mortality rates from coronary artery disease in Maryland rank in
14 the top one-third in the nation with more than 14,000 people dying annually,
15 including one-third before the age of 65; and

16 WHEREAS, Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating are leading risk factors
17 that contribute to at least 300,000 preventable deaths each year in the U.S.; and

1 WHEREAS, In 2000, approximately 26% of Americans and 24% of
2 Marylanders engaged in no leisure time physical activity; and

3 WHEREAS, In 1998, the obesity rate in Maryland was greater than 15%; and

4 WHEREAS, In the United States, the number of adults and children who are
5 overweight has risen sharply over the past 25 years, and the percentage of adults and
6 children who make trips on foot dropped during that same time period; and

7 WHEREAS, Health care costs related to cardiovascular disease in Maryland
8 are \$2.25 billion yearly, and the nationwide costs attributed to obesity are \$99 billion,
9 \$52 billion in direct health costs and \$47 billion in indirect costs annually; and

10 WHEREAS, If all inactive Americans were to participate in physical activity,
11 an estimated \$76.6 billion in direct health costs would be saved; and

12 WHEREAS, More than 10% of children are overweight, and encouraging
13 children to walk more can establish more physically active and healthy lifestyles; and

14 WHEREAS, Suicide is one of the top 10 leading causes of death, and physical
15 activity reduces feelings of depression and anxiety; and

16 WHEREAS, The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that all Americans walk
17 at least 30 minutes per day, 5 days a week; and

18 WHEREAS, Walking is one of the best forms of exercise because it helps
19 reduce cholesterol, improve cardiovascular fitness, improve blood pressure, reduce
20 the risk of heart attack, and prevent colon cancer, osteoporosis, and Type 2 diabetes;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, 348,000 Maryland residents have Type 2 diabetes, and walking 30
23 minutes a day cuts the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by 58%; and

24 WHEREAS, Walking is ideally suited for rehabilitation after illness, surgery,
25 or injury by strengthening the heart, lungs, and circulatory system; and

26 WHEREAS, The risk of injury while walking is less than with other forms of
27 physical activity, and injuries while walking are less severe than with many other
28 exercises; and

29 WHEREAS, Walking is a fun activity that friends and family can do together;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, Walking promotes informal interactions between people and
32 strengthens community, and many neighborhoods lack any social contact between
33 neighbors; and

34 WHEREAS, Walking is a natural activity that does not require any specialized
35 equipment or training and is an inexpensive physical activity that most Maryland
36 citizens can do easily, at any time during the day; and

1 WHEREAS, Walking is as close to a universal physical activity as there is and
2 can be easily integrated into the daily routine of most Marylanders; and

3 WHEREAS, Most people in Maryland already walk every day and a person can
4 engage in other activities while walking, such as meeting and greeting neighbors,
5 talking with friends and family, observing nature or the community, and running
6 errands or shopping; and

7 WHEREAS, Environments that encourage walking help to promote tourism
8 and commerce; and

9 WHEREAS, Increased walking is an important facet of livable and sustainable
10 communities; and

11 WHEREAS, Walking is an environmentally friendly method of transportation,
12 which helps to reduce reliance on automobiles while cutting traffic congestion and air
13 pollution; and

14 WHEREAS, Walking as a symbol for Maryland will benefit individual citizens
15 and Maryland as a whole; now, therefore,

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
17 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article - State Government**

19 13-318.

20 WALKING IS THE STATE EXERCISE.

21 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take
22 effect October 1, 2003.